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DEAR BEK,

JANUARY 19.

I have several fashionable and very pretty weddings to describe this week, and yet I hear of several other interesting matrimonial events to follow shortly. The marriage of Mr J. L. Bloomfield and Miss Hilda Frances Ruck, youngest daughter of the late Captain Fredk. W. Ruck, 15th Regiment Light Infantry, was solemnized in St. Mary's Cathedral Church, Parnell. I was going to give you a full description of the wedding, but I learn that you have already received a long account of it. Therefore I will, perforce, content myself with all the names of the guests whom I can recall, hoping I shall not repeat those already given. The yachts belonging to the Auckland Yacht Club, of which Mr Bloomfield is a prominent member, were gay with bunting throughout the day in honour of the event. Mrs Whitney (jun.), black merveilles and lace gown, fawn hat with pale blue ostrich tips; Mrs Coates, grey gown, and eufei coloured bonnet; Mrs R. Blair, pretty cream silk gown flowered with black and trimmed with black velvet, cream and black bonnet; Mrs Durbie, pretty grey flowered costume, black lace hat with grey flowers; her sister (Mrs J. Ansenne) looked pretty in a striped cream gown and cream hat; Mrs Haines, black skirt and jacket, white linen shirt, and black lace hat with white feathers; Miss Wylie Brown, pretty cornflower blue gown flowered with white and trimmed with white embroidery, pretty hat trimmed with cream feathers; Miss Anderson (Parnell), pretty white dress, and black hat trimmed with buttercup yellow; Miss Lawford also wore a dainty white dress and hat; Mrs Taylor (Parnell), pretty flowered French muslin gown, and bonnet to match. A number of other guests were present, but their names were unknown to me. Amongst the gentlemen were Colonel Carré, Dr. Haines, Rev. C. M. Nelson, Mr Leatham, etc.

On the following afternoon Mr Edward Morton, of the firm of H. B. Morton and Co., merchants, was united in matrimony to Miss Gertrude H. Biss, eldest daughter of Mr S. B. Biss, Chief Postmaster of Auckland. The marriage was solemnized in the Bishop's private chapel, Bishop's Court, Parnell, the sacred edifice being crowded with the many friends of the young couple. The ceremony was performed by the Rev. J. Bates, of Holy Trinity Church, North Shore. The bride was given away by her father, and wore an exquisitely handsome gown of rich ivory white sarah silk, trained, and trimmed with white embroidered chiffon, wreath of orange blossoms, and beautifully embroidered tulle veil, and carried a very beautiful bouquet made by Miss Speight, and composed of pure white blossoms and delicate maiden-hair ferns, tied with streamers of ribbon. The bride was attended by three bridesmaids—Miss Mand H. Biss, Miss May Fisher, and a tiny sister of the bride. The first couple wore gowns alike of ivory white *crêpe de chênille*, sashes of Liberty silk, and pretty hats of white lace trimmed with gauze ribbon and white and yellow poppies. Each carried a lovely bouquet tied with ribbon to harmonise with the gowns, and wore lovely gold bangles, the gift of the bridegroom. The third bridesmaid was simply attired in a pretty frock of soft white muslin, finished at the throat and elbows with dainty frills. She also wore a cap composed of fine valenciennes lace and ribbon, and carried a lovely basket of flowers. Messrs Arthur Morton and Noel Biss attended the bridegroom in the capacity of groomsmen. At the conclusion of the ceremony the bridal party drove to the residence of Mr and Mrs Biss, Carleton Gore Road, where they were entertained. The happy couple received numerous congratulatory telegrams from friends in other parts, and many very costly and handsome wedding gifts were exhibited. Throughout the day the vessels in the harbour were gay with bunting in honour of the auspicious event. Mrs S. B. Biss (mother of the bride) wore a handsome gown of rich black silk and lace, black bonnet relieved with yellow chiffon, bouquet to correspond; Mrs Morton (mother of the bridegroom) wore a rich black satin gown, beautiful lace mantle and bonnet; Miss Morton, pretty heliotrope and gold gown, cream hat trimmed with feathers; Mrs H. B.

Morton, beautiful gown of silk veiled with black lace and relieved with pale pink, bonnet to correspond; Mrs Graves Aicken, handsome long black lace mantle over a black silk gown, pretty bonnet trimmed with gauze ribbon; Mrs Douglas, rich black sarah silk gown, black bonnet relieved with white; Miss Philson, dainty flowered French muslin gown, black hat with pink roses.

Another wedding which occasioned a considerable amount of interest amongst a large circle of friends was solemnized at St. Andrew's Church, Epsom, the happy couple being Mr Thomas Billington and Miss Mand Watkins, daughter of Mr Watkins, of Epsom. The Rev. Mr Marshall performed the ceremony, which was witnessed by a large congregation of interested friends and others. The bride was given away by her father, and looked exceedingly pretty in a lovely trained gown of soft white cashmere finished with lace and orange blossoms, and wreath of orange blossoms surmounted by a long tulle veil. She carried an exquisite bridal bouquet, from which depended long loops of ribbon. The bride was attended by four bridesmaids—the Misses Clara and Flossie Billington, and the Misses Watkins (2)—all wearing tasteful and pretty gowns alike of white muslin, and dainty hats, and each carried a lovely basket of flowers. Mr Parkinson of the Loan and Mercantile Company acted as best man. Mr and Mrs Watkins entertained the bridal party at their residence, and the newly-wedded couple, after receiving the congratulations of their friends, left by the afternoon train for the Waikato, en route for Roturua Hot Lakes, where the honeymoon will be spent. Miss Billington wore a stylish tailor-made fawn costume, and pretty terra-cotta hat; Mrs T. E. Billington, striped heliotrope silk gown, and cream hat; Mrs R. A. Drummond, very pretty pale green gown, and becoming cream and pale pink hat.

I hear that the marriage of Mr A. L. Edwards and Miss Johnstone takes place shortly.

A little bird whispers that engagements have just taken place between Miss Mand Ruck and Mr Leatham, of Parnell, and Mr Norman Williams, a prominent member of the Gordon Cricket Club, and Miss Puckey.

The lovely summer weather we are now enjoying is specially suitable for all sorts of outdoor amusements. Children's parties are much more easily managed in a large garden than in a house. So thought Mrs C. V. Houghton and Miss Battley when they issued invitations to some of the juvenile friends of Miss Elsie Battley and Master Noel Houghton. The visit of the latter to Laurel Bank, Mount Albert, is drawing to a close, as Mr and Mrs Battley are shortly expected from Hobart, where they are resting for a week or two on their way out from England. The little aunt, clad in pretty pink, and the smaller nephew, in blue and white, received their diminutive guests under the lovely oaks which make Mr Battley's garden look so English and pretty. Mrs Houghton, in black skirt and grey and white striped bodice, and her sister, Miss Battley, in cream with Roman striped sleeves, were untiring in their efforts to amuse the visitors. It was too hot for much exertion, and the boys lazily watched the girls singing, under Miss Battley's skilful guidance, an aristocratic version of 'Sally, Sally Water,' to a very pretty tune, also a new game. All round the village, Miss Battley still suffers from her throat, though she is now allowed to sing a little. A very delicious tea was brought out and partaken of under the trees, the boys roasting themselves to do full justice to thin bread-and-butter and 'thousands,' jelly, blanc-mange, and cakes of all kinds. The iced cake was replete with indigestible articles, such as two or three threepences, sixpences, buttons—in fact, I never saw such a 'rich' cake before. Amongst the guests were Mrs E. Cooper, in a pretty white embroidered dress, black hat; her two little girls in white with black ribbons; Miss Florrie Dixon, white, black hat and sash; Miss Kathleen Alexander and her two brothers, Harold and Ernest; Misses Mildred, May, and Jessie White, and their brother Arthur; Miss Dorrie, and Master Fred Carr; Miss Pearl Corrie and her brother Arthur. Almost all the little girls were in white, and looked so cool and fresh. After tea they adjourned to one of the paddocks, and thoroughly enjoyed themselves until eight o'clock, when they separated.

In many of our churches yesterday reference was made to the sudden death of the Duke of Clarence and Avondale. All Saints' was draped in black with a purple band. Other churches used white instead of colored flowers on the communion table. The 'Dead March in Saul' was played, the congregation generally having the good taste and *stare* to stand during its performance. We believe we can do nothing for the dead, but we can at least show our sympathy with a bereaved family, and our loyalty to our Queen and country. Probably not here very few will wear the complimentary three weeks' mourning ordered for the general public, except those connected with the government or civic offices. The warship H.M.S. Tauranga is in mourning, and all the flags on the various public offices are half-mast high.

And still the chronicle of our amusements must go on. So here we off to Mr J. L. Wilson's house in Renuera, where we encounter the friends and members of the Young Women's Christian Association. There a very pleasant afternoon was spent, the new Secretary, Miss Macdonald, being present.

Cricket in the Domain next calls for a word. A very interesting match was got up by our energetic Colonel Goring between his men and some representatives of H.M.S. Tauranga. Several of the officers are keen cricketers, and watched the game from under the welcome shade of the trees, where they discussed an excellent *ad hoc* luncheon with the Colonel and Mrs Goring, etc.

A large and successful tea was given by the members of the Auckland Polo Club this week at Potter's Paddock to their lady friends, where there was a great number of the

fair sex. The ground now is perfectly arranged, the lawn being mowed and the unevenness smoothed away. The members who played were the Captain (Mr O'Rourke), Messrs Lockhart, Colgrove, Gilmore, Francis, England, Syd. Williamson, and Wansborough. It is really most astonishing to see how much they have improved. The game was thoroughly exciting, and of course we were now and then entertained by a fall or some antics of the ponies, who do not as yet perfectly understand the game. One of the ponies wished to play himself, and caught the handle of the stick in his tail, and seemed very loth to part with it. Amongst those present I noticed Mrs (Dr.) Lewis, navy costume, grey hat; Mrs (Dr.) Honeyman, a very handsome grey cashmere, yellow silk front trimmed with white lace, toque of yellow roses and white feathers; Mrs Lawry, spotted navy silk; Mrs Seymour-George, dark grey spotted delaine; and her daughter, cornflower blue, white sash hat; Miss Anderson, a stylish check hat with yellow poppies; Miss Jarvis, white; Miss Mowbray, fawn; Miss Kerr-Taylor, white; Miss Banks, grey, and her sister, white; Miss McLaughlin, grey and black striped silk trimmed handsomely with heavy white lace or embroidery; Miss Marks—looked charming in navy; Mrs Gertz, white. Mr and Mrs Graham were driving, as also were Miss Firth and her sister, Miss M. Firth was riding, as also Miss Binks and Mrs Bilsborough. There were a great many other ladies present, but I cannot at present recall them. Amongst the gentlemen were Dr. Lewis, Messrs J. Coates, Stubbings, Daveney, Chamberlin, O'Sullivan, Colbeck, McKellar and others.

Mrs Moss-Davis gave a very successful little dance. Water picnics seem to be quite *à la mode* at present, and the one given by Mrs (Dr.) Honeyman was a very *recherché* affair. About forty guests were invited, and the Britannia was chartered for the occasion. I must tell you that the picnic was given for a Mr Morton, who is engaged to Miss Isabel Hay, of Renuera. We first went up and down the harbour, called at St. Helier's Bay, and eventually landed at the Queen-street wharf, only too sorry that the excursion was over. Amongst the guests I noticed Mesdames (Dr.) Lewis, Haines, Lawry, Nathan, Misses Firth, Marry, Mrs and Miss Moss-Davis, and numerous other ladies and gentlemen.

Mr Hay, a relation of Dr. Honeyman's, also gave a picnic, this time to that charming little spot, Lake Takapona, but not being there, I cannot tell you very much about it, only having an account of it from one of the party. I believe they all had a lovely time, what with the boating on the lake, dancing, a very *chic* dinner, and a splendid host, what more could one wish for? Mesdames Honeyman, Lawry, Haines, Misses Firth, Mrs and Miss Moss-Davis, etc., etc., were of the party.

Whilst informing you of the amount of dissipation going on, I must not forget to tell you of the charming little dance Mrs Walter Lawry, 'Glenside,' gave. It was a most perfect evening, and everybody had *carte blanche* to wander about the garden just as they wished. The ladies all looked very nice. The hostess wore a handsome black dress trimmed with silver net; Mrs Honeyman (for whom the dance was given) wore a lovely amber silk dress, trimmed with chiffon; Mrs Moss-Davis, black silk; and her daughter looked very well in a cream silk, as also did Miss Power and Miss Kilgour.

MURIEL.

MY DEAR BEK,

Though it is many months since I wrote to you, I now venture to send you a letter, as it is upon that never stale topic, at any rate to the female mind—a wedding. Being thoroughly *au fait* in the subject of the recent marriage of Miss Hilda Ruck and Mr Lucas Bloomfield, I think you may like to have a full, true, and particular account of it. Long before the time appointed for the ceremony—5 p.m.—the lookers-on began to collect in and around St. Mary's Church, Parnell, and we guests had to run the gauntlet of many pairs of eyes as we betook ourselves to our places. That was the moment when we felt painfully aware of any weak points in our armour, and a winking, very fold in one's wedding garment was a humiliating fact. Whilst awaiting the bride's arrival, my dear Bek, I will describe the frocks of the guests as they arrived and took their seats in the chancel. Mrs Bloomfield, the mother of the bridegroom, wore brown satin with puffs of cream colour down one side, and a bonnet of creamy lace and feathers; Mrs Hancock's gown was also brown, but of brocade, and her cream coloured bonnet had touches of gold in it; Miss Wray was in black lace and satin, with a white bonnet. These three ladies carried very handsome bouquets, as did Mrs W. Bloomfield, whose cream-coloured frock of a soft falling woollen fabric opened over a vest embroidered in heliotrope and silver. Her bonnet was such an airy structure that one rather doubted if the regulation for a woman's head being covered in church was being obeyed. It consisted of three standing up ribs of heliotrope and silver, to which were fastened some white ostrich tips. Mrs Carr wore black broche and lace with some beautiful scarlet hibiscus blossoms to relieve it and match her bonnet, of which the motif was scarlet; Mrs Goring's silver grey silk had vest, coat, lappets, etc., of white silk embroidered in grey and silver, and her black jet bonnet was enlivened with touches of bright pink; Mrs Rosecrance had a very pretty gown of green and old gold trimmed with guipure, with a hat to match, and bouquet of harmonizing tints; Miss Mowbray, blue and white ponce silk trimmed with lace; Miss Power and Miss Anderson both wore simple white frocks and flower hats—a most suitable costume on such an intensely hot day and one which we, their elders, in our silks and bonnets, envied I can assure you, but the disadvantages of age are many, alas! Having given you some of the guests *à grands carreaux*, I will tantalize you no longer, but come to the wedding party proper. When we were all beginning to be tired of seeing who was better dressed than oneself, Mrs Ruck appeared, escorted by her old friend, Colonel Goring. She looked remarkably well in a dark blue ponce silk flowered with white, and trimmed with white guipure, her bonnet of blue corn cockles having strings and puffs of cream chiffon. Then the wedding hymn was begun, and we saw the young bride coming up the aisle, on the arm of Mr James Coates, who, after playing best man at many weddings, has been promoted a step, and made his first appearance on any stage as 'the heavy father.' The bridal gown was of ivory white brocade, with flouncing of Irish point on the front of the skirt and the base of the bodice, the long train being left plain.